Visa rules of America

†1849. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that business tours of our countrymen are getting adversely affected due to stringent visa rules in America;

(b) if so, whether Government would propose to take any steps to make available the said visa easily and expeditiously to the persons interested to visit America for business and tour purpose; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) Visa regulations are in the domain of the State issuing visas. According to data obtained from the US Embassy in India, there has been a steady increase in the number of visa issued to Indians by the US Embassy and its Consulates in India. In 2003 (US fiscal year-October to September), 2.77 lakh non-immigrant visas were issued to Indians. This increased to 3.047 lakhs in 2004 and further to 3.138 lakhs in 2005. US Embassy has also reported reduction in visa processing time due to a series of measures taken in 2006. In addition, there is a Business Executive Programme run by the US Embassy. Businesses registered under this programme get the benefit of facilitated and expedited visa procedures.

Trilateral talks of India, Russia and China

1850. DR. P.C.ALEXANDER: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the main objective of the trilateral talks between India, Russia and China which have been conducted at the level of Heads of Governments and the Foreign Ministers;

(b) whether any specific areas of co-operation among the three countries have been identified in the recent talks held at Delhi at the Foreign Ministers level; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the action proposed to be taken on them ?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) The India, Russia and China trilateral talks at the level of Heads of Governments and Foreign Ministers are aimed at exchanging views on the global situation, regional developments of common concern, counter-terrorism and anti-narco-trafficking efforts and trilateral economic cooperation. Specifically, the agenda for the discussions among the Foreign Ministers of India, Russia and China, which took place in New Delhi on 14 February 2007 included trilateral economic cooperation in areas such as energy, transport infrastructure, health,, information technology and bio-technology. India, Russia and China expect to hold official and expert level discussions in these areas and have agreed that a trilateral business forum would be held in India during 2007. In addition, India proposes to host a trilateral seminar on emerging geo-strategic trends with the participation of officials and scholars from the three countries in 2007. The text of a Joint Communique issued after the recent trilateral meeting is attached as Statement.

Statement

Joint Communique regarding 'Trilateral Talks of India, Russia and China'to be

A trilateral meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Republic of India, the Russian Federation, and the People's Republic of China was held in New Delhi on February 14,2007.

The Ministers noted that the mechanism of trilateral meetings is a manifestation of enhanced mutual understanding and trust among the three countries and positively assessed the outcome of their meetings. They agreed that the Summit level trilateral meeting held in St. Petersburg on July 17, 2006 on the sidelines of the G-8 Summit demonstrated the willingness of the three sides to carry forward consultations on issues of shared interest, at the highest political level, with the aim of promoting the development objectives of the three countries as well as peace, security and stability in the region and the world. They reaffirmed that trilateral cooperation was not directed against the interests of any other country and was, on the contrary, intended to. promote international harmony and understanding and find common ground amidst divergent interests. They also emphasized the strong commitment of India, Russia and China to multilateral diplomacy.

The Ministers discussed the political, security and economic aspects of the current global situation, besides exchanging views on how international relations are being presently conducted. They noted that globalization opens up opportunities for a more even distribution of development resources and influence in the world thus creating a foundation for a more stable and balanced international system. They also emphasized the need to preserve the cultural and civilizational diversity of the contemporary world and to promote the existing initiatives for dialogue among civilizations and religions. They expressed their conviction that democratization of international relations is the key to building an increasingly multi-polar world order that would be based on principles of equality of nations - big or small, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries, international law and mutual respect. The Ministers acknowledged that the UN is an appropriate instrument for promoting and attaining such a world order. The Sides stressed the importance of reforms at the UN, including the UN Security Council, in order to deal with the myriad challenges of today's world more effectively. They shared the view that member states should aim to make the UN more transparent, efficient and reflective of contemporary realities. The Sides agreed to take steps in this direction. In this context, the Foreign Ministers of Russia and China reiterated that their countries attach great importance to the status of India in international affairs, and understand and support India's aspirations to play a greater role in the United Nations.

The Ministers noted that international terrorism continued to pose a grave threat to all nations and expressed concern about the new and evolving forms of the menace. They agreed that under central and coordinating role of the UN and within the framework of its Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy collective action must be strengthened further by taking into account the mutating character of terrorism and its networks, They agreed that an early entry into force of International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and the earliest possible adoption in the UN of the India-sponsored draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism would lead to further consolidation of the international legal basis for combating terrorism. The Sides underlined the substantial of their counter-terrorism cooperation in regional organizations. They agreed that there can be no justification for any act of terrorism, irrespective of motivations, wherever and by whosoever committed. They stressed that

selective approaches in counter-terrorism cannot yield sustainable results and it should be combated in consistent, sustained and comprehensive manner without any double standards. The Sides also agreed to coordinate action against all factors that feed international terrorism, including its financing, illegal drug trafficking and trans-national organized crime.

The Ministers agreed that India, Russia and China, as countries with growing international influence, can make substantive positive contribution to global peace, security and stability. In this context, the Ministers exchanged views on various regional and international issues of concern. They agreed that cooperation rather than confrontation should govern approaches to regional and global affairs. While welcoming India's joining the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as an observer country, the Foreign Ministers of Russia and China stated that they would actively facilitate early realization of mutually beneficial contribution of India to the SCO

The Ministers paid specific attention to the high potential of trilateral cooperation and synergy in the economic field. The Ministers reiterated the considerable potential for mutually beneficial economic interaction among the three countries in areas such as energy, transport infrastructure, health, high technologies, including IT and biotechnology. Recognizing the important role of the business and industrial circles of the three consistently growing and large economies, the Ministers agreed to advice their respective apex business bodies to organize a trilateral business forum taking into account the capabilities and potential of the three countries. The Ministers agreed to monitor this process with a view to facilitating the agreed business meeting which would take place during 2007.

The Ministers expressed satisfaction at the results of the trilateral meeting in New Delhi and agreed to hold their next meeting in China.

New Delhi;

February 14, 2007.

Detention centre in Guantanamo

1851. SHRI MOINUL HASSAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state: